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Hustle and bustle of Westover, a hub of activity



-- photos by MSgt. W.C. Pope

WELCOMING HOME OUR OWN – Members of the 439th Aeromedical Evacuation Squadron return home from Operation Iraqi Freedom. Returning home are SrA Rebecca Hinch, MSgt. Steven Savage, Capt. Daniel McCarthy, and Maj. Charles Kerr.



BIG BOSS – Putting a C-5 in its place.



<<CHEEZE – A group shot of the 439th AES with the crew of the C-130J from the 403th Wing, Keesler AFB, Miss. They trained together last weekend making it one of the first times any AES has trained on a "J" model.



-- photo by MSgt. Tom Allocco

>>SALUTES – A ceremony saluting 45 Westover retirees was held on Saturday and ended with a tribute to our fallen comrades.

<<REUNION – A soldier from the 414th Civil Affairs from Utica, NY, hugs his wife.



Air Force thanks and pins parents

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Secretary of the Air Force James G. Roche and Air Force Chief of Staff General John P. Jumper will officially launch a new Air Force outreach program on Wednesday, May 7, at 11:30



a.m. EDT. The program is designed to thank parents of all airmen for supporting their military service. Secretary Roche and General Jumper will present USAF Parent Pins to the parents of one active duty airman, one Air National Guard airman and one Air Force Reserve Command airman. The presentations will take place in the office of the Secretary of the Air Force (4E874) and is open for media coverage.

The Parent Pin program gives every Air Force member the opportunity to register online and request a letter of thanks jointly signed by Secretary Roche and General Jumper be sent to up to two parents (or parental figures). Included with the letters will be lapel pins displaying the letter "P" cradled in the Air Force symbol.

Parents are asked to wear their pins as signs of support for their children's military service.

"Military service is no longer a rite of passage," said Secretary Roche. "We now have an entire generation of Americans who do not understand the military culture. The Parent Pin can narrow the gulf between those who serve and the community at large. It opens the door for the parents of our airmen to explain to others what their children are doing for the Air Force and what the Air Force has done for their children."

The Parent Pins are a contemporary adaptation of the World War II "E" flags that were used to recognize companies for contributions to the war effort. They are presented to parents on display cards that explain their lineage. The accompanying letters address recipients and airmen by name and are intended to communicate to parents the importance of their children's military service, to express sincere gratitude for parents' continued support, and to convey a sense of partnership between the Air Force and the parents of America's airmen.

"It is in the best interest of our nation to develop public understanding of the Air Force's mission and objectives," said Secretary Roche. "The parents of our airmen might not always understand our mission, but they nonetheless are helping us meet our objectives through their continuing support of their sons and daughters - the men and women serving today, and those who decide to serve in the future."

If you wish to attend, please contact Maj Linda Haseloff or 2nd Lt. Sara Banda, 703-695-9871 or 0640.

All star thanks

Dear Brig. Gen. Mazick,

One of my pilots, Lt. Col. Craig Edkins, recently returned from Operation Iraqi Freedom, where he supported General Franks' flying mission. Colonel Edkins had the pleasure of transiting through Westover ARB and came back to Andrews singing praises for the warm reception he and his fellow travelers received.

I want to personally thank the men and women of Westover, both military and civilian, who took the time to leave their homes in the middle of the night to welcome our airmen to American Soil. Their gratitude to our returning troops is heartwarming and I know much appreciated.

Thank you for taking care of them in such a first Class style. I hope to be able to do the same for yours one day!

Sincerely,
Brig. Gen. Glenn F. Spears, Commander
89th Airlift Wing, Andrews AFB, Md.

Our upland sandpiper is a big win for birders

by MSgt. Tom Allocco

We've got the upland sandpiper. That might not sound like much, but to a birder, an upland sandpiper is gold.

Eighteen birders, known as bird watchers in the vernacular, came to Westover last Monday to see the upland sandpiper and other birds that nest here or migrate through Westover. At least two of the birds here, the upland sandpiper and the grasshopper sparrow, are on the endangered list. The grasshopper sparrow won't arrive here until mid-May.

Lt. Col. David Moore, Wing Chief of Safety, escorted the birders. "They would have liked to have seen the grasshopper sparrow, but they were delighted to see the upland sandpiper. They're much less common because of the reduction of grassland in Massachusetts," he said.

They also saw two wild turkeys and a red tailed hawk on base.

Other less common birds which they may have been looking for include the hooded merganser, which arrives at the end of February; the northern parula, from late April through May; and the eastern phoebe. They would have been particularly fortunate to have spotted a yellow bellied sapsucker is here for a few weeks in April and May and returns in the fall. The common yellowthroat is an uncommon bird due to arrive in mid-May.

Westover contains the largest contiguous grassland in the Northeast, 1,600 acres of the 2,600 acres of the installation. A large wetland complex created by Stoney Brook and Wade Lake covers the northeastern part of the base. Grasslands, pine plantations, forested wetlands, sedge meadows and cranberry bogs provide varied habitat.

Moore and others here work with the Massachusetts Division of Fish and Wildlife to protect the birds. Large sections of grassland are off-limits to protect them during breeding season.

Pat Stats

Served since Feb. 2, 2003
4,854 passengers --- 1,636 aircraft
17,117,139 pounds of cargo
Info from MSgt. Jim Garrity, 42APS

Meals

9,669 hot meals served
Box lunches: 4,568

Info from MSgt. David Beauregard, 439SVS

PATRIOT
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(EDITOR'S NOTE: Security guidelines prohibit using last names of deploying reservists.)

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Express-ions

